

Polk County Juvenile Drug Court: Recommendations for the Future

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Abstract

Polk County Juvenile Drug Court (“PCJDC”) has been operating since 2001, and has built a solid reputation within the state by addressing juvenile offenders with accompanying substance abuse problems. This paper examines the PCJDC with the hopes of identifying both what has made it successful and where improvements can be made to the program. Through interviews and surveys with current and former PCJDC staff and a review of current academic research, we offer some insight to best practices of similar programs and how they could be applied within the PCJDC program.

Introduction

For close to 15 years, Polk County Juvenile Drug Court (“PCJDC”) has served youth with substance abuse issues. These youth are offered treatment, as well as comprehensive supervision and weekly attendance in a program. Despite being well received within the Fifth Juvenile District in Iowa, the program has been reviewed only twice since its inception in 2001. The last review was in 2011. With the support of Judge Colin Witt, who is charged with direct oversight of the Juvenile Drug Court, our group has comprehensively studied the court’s practices. The reason for our review is twofold: First, we seek to offer an updated and independent evaluation of court practices based on a comprehensive review from recent staff, and also against the best practices from current academic scholarship. Second, after careful review of current court practices, we make strategic recommendations in an effort help the court continue the program’s success into the future.

Due to the time constraints of this study, our research is limited to four key areas of Polk County Juvenile Drug Court’s practices. These areas, which were identified through preliminary interviews with key figures, include:

1. Admissions Practices
2. Family Engagement
3. Gender Specific Considerations
4. Incentives and Sanctions

In the first section of this paper, we will offer a general overview of Drug Courts in the United States. This will help the reader become familiar with the justification and socio-political context of the court, as well as their processes and procedures. In the second section, our group will survey the best practices of the four needs identified above, as well as evaluate the current status of the PCJDC’s position on those needs. Finally, our team will offer key recommendations on how the court can address each individual need.

Overview of Drug Courts

History of Drug Courts

The first drug court surfaced in Dade County Florida in 1989 as an attempt to control the number of non-violent, cocaine-addicted offenders flooding the court rooms and jails. Local justice officials were tired of the revolving door of addicts who were repeatedly rearrested for new drug-related crimes. With the dramatic increase of this new class of offenders, justice officials determined that the system was ill-prepared to handle and that a new approach was needed. There was a unique solution aimed at diverting non-violent drug offenders into drug treatment, while maintaining judicial control of the offender. Working as a team, they were able to effect significant change in the behaviors of the drug court participants. Enactment of drug courts provided an alternative solution for the criminal justice system using a therapeutic approach to correct behavior, instead of a more common punitive approach.

Other communities were being overwhelmed by similar circumstances and began to experiment with how they handle low-level drug offenders. The traditional system rarely provided substance abuse treatment as part of the sentencing process. In contrast, drug courts integrated substance abuse treatment sanctions and incentives within existing systems, to place drug offenders into substance abuse programs supervised by the courts:

The primary purpose of [drug court] programs is to use a court's authority to reduce crime by changing defendants' substance abuse behavior. In exchange for the possibility of dismissed charges or reduced sentences, eligible defendants who agree to participate are diverted to drug court programs in various ways and at various stages in the judicial process. These programs are typically offered to defendants as an alternative to probation or short-term incarceration." (GAO, 2005, p.3).

Drug courts were a significant departure from traditional court practices, and since early drug courts showed promise, the new approach caught on quickly as an alternative approach to manage drug offenders. In 1994, Congress joined local communities by enacting the 1994 Crime Act, which provided grants to state and local courts and governments to establish drug courts.

While the Miami-Dade County Drug Court revolutionized the way courts across the nation dealt with drug offenders, the addition of federal grants greatly expanded the existence of drug courts

nationwide. Ten years after the first drug court was created, 492 drug courts were operating across the U.S. According the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance, as of September, 2014, there were 2,619 drug court programs in the U.S., including tribal drug courts, and courts in D.C. and U.S. territories. In the near future, drug courts will be operating in 1,621 out of 3,143 counties in the U.S. (BJA, 2014, p.1).

Juvenile Drug Courts

Recognizing the success of adult drug courts in reducing recidivism, the natural next step was to review whether drug courts would be successful in the juvenile system. The juvenile justice system looked to the adult drug courts already established in the community for a model with which to develop a similar system in the juvenile system. However, the circumstances of juvenile offenders vary widely from adult drug offenders and it quickly became apparent that juvenile drug courts would look much different than their adult counterparts.

Incidents of drug use among teens, including alcohol and other drugs (AOD), peaked in the mid-1990s when over half of high school students reported alcohol use and a third were binge drinking. A quarter of high school students were smoking marijuana, 9.5 percent had used cocaine and 14.6 percent had used inhalants. Because of the correlation between drug use and delinquent behaviors, the number of juvenile cases in 1995 grew by 145 percent over the 1991 numbers (BJA, 2003, p.6)

Because the nature of juvenile courts has traditionally been rehabilitative, they had an adaptive advantage in switching over the punitive nature of adult courts. Applying the theory of therapeutic jurisprudence was not as difficult in the juvenile system because the use of therapeutic interventions was common. "From its founding, the juvenile court's mission was to correct *and rehabilitate* children who had violated the law, to protect the community from their delinquent behavior, and to strengthen the family." (BJA, 2003, p.6). Historically, juvenile courts always addressed the juvenile's needs holistically. However, juvenile drug offenders proved difficult to treat even under those parameters.

Juvenile courts looked to the adult drug courts for solutions, but soon found that developing juvenile drug courts was more complex than adults because of the number of community agencies involved. Challenges unique to juvenile drug courts include: developing strategies to motivate juvenile

offenders to change, counteracting negative peer pressure and; addressing family needs, especially if there is substance abuse among adults in the home, complying with juvenile confidentiality requirements, and responding to developmental changes in juveniles. (IDHS, 200, p.1)

Communities that established juvenile drug courts wanted to provide intensive judicial intervention and supervision to juveniles and families involved in substance abuse, not found in the traditional juvenile justice system, which often only treated the underlying offense. Although the composition of juvenile drug courts varies, most are a docket of the juvenile court with a designated judge. Youth who have been identified as having substance abuse problems are referred to drug court. The judge leads a team comprised of juvenile court officers, social workers, school and vocational professionals, law enforcement personnel, probation officers, as well as the prosecution and defense attorneys. The team determines the best approach to address the juvenile's substance abuse and other problems.

In general the drug courts emphasize goals related to the holistic traditions common within juvenile systems:

1. Provide immediate intervention, treatment and structure for juveniles who use drugs through on-going oversight by the juvenile court judge and his team.
 2. Improve the juvenile's ability to function by addressing problems that may contribute to drug use.
 3. Provide skills for juveniles to help them lead a substance and crime free life, including educational development, and sense of self-worth.
 4. Strengthen families by improving their capacity to provide structure and guidance to their children.
 5. Promote accountability of juvenile and those who provide services to them.
- (BJA, 2003, p.7)

History of Polk County Drug Courts

As juvenile drug courts gained popularity across the U.S. as an effective treatment for juvenile drug offenders, federal grant dollars became available to assist state and local agencies with establishing juvenile drug courts. Polk County took advantage of this opportunity and received a Juvenile Crime Prevention Community Grant (JCPCG) from 1995 to 2000. To administer the grant, Polk County established a Community Prevention Policy Board (the "Board"), a fifty-member planning organization that oversaw several grants, including one to establish the juvenile drug court. In 1999, the Board created

a planning group for a juvenile drug court that included representatives from the juvenile justice system, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, nonprofit human service agencies and key community leaders.

In addition, a “Comprehensive Strategy” for Polk County youth was written, which developed a list of high risk indicators in Polk County. The list included: problems with family management; drug availability; academic failure; economic deprivation; and community disengagement. By identifying the most pervasive risk factors, the Board was able to review gaps in services. Aftercare for juveniles leaving substance abuse treatment was ranked highly on the list. The juvenile justice system was tasked with developing a system of sanctions and intermediate interventions to help youth maintain sobriety at least 12 months following discharge from a substance abuse treatment program.

The Polk County Community Prevention Policy Board was responsible for developing the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court. In doing so, there primarily were four objectives identified: “[Y]oung offenders stay clean and sober, do well in school, do well at home, and have a job if school is going well.” (IDHS, 2002, p.2) In 1999, Polk County received a grant to establish a drug court, funded through the federal Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG), and administered by the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP), who also provided technical assistance. Polk County also received funds from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and provide grant reports.

Survey of Best Practices in Juvenile Drug Court

In order to effectively make recommendations to the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court, our group studied the existing literature in order to better understand the four areas identified for improvement: Better and more inclusive admissions practices, Stronger family engagement, improved gender specific programming, and more personalized incentives and sanctions. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the conception of the document that guides the development of drug courts. Afterward, we seek to identify and present practices from which local officials may benefit from reviewing.

Strategies in Practice

As adult drug courts gained popularity across the US, and juvenile courts attempted to replicate that success, the National Drug Court Institute and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges convened a workgroup of experts from across the country, including prosecutors, defense, juvenile court administrators, education, treatment, probation, and academia. “As a workgroup, their task was to outline a framework for planning, implementing, and operating a juvenile drug court and then to develop a publication that described the framework.” (BJA, 2003, p.1) In 2003, the workgroup published their results, “Juvenile Drug Courts: Strategies in Practice.” Going forward, we will refer to this document as the “Strategies document”.

The Strategies document provided model framework for court systems to establish a juvenile drug court and served as a guide for planning and implementation. The workgroup wanted to ensure that the guide would provide a basis for programming that was “data driven, outcome focused and research based” (BJA, 2003, p.1). The Strategies document outlined 16 strategies needed in a successful juvenile drug court. This document, which is held in high esteem by Polk County Juvenile Drug Court staff, serves as a compass by which many drug courts develop and review their policies and procedures.

Admissions Practices

Strategy Number 3 in the Strategies document, “Clearly Defined Target Population and Eligibility Criteria,” provides best practices in how to establish which juveniles would be best served in a juvenile drug court. To define the target population and establish eligibility criteria, a planning team must look at the underlying charge and the behavior surrounding it. Unlike adult offenders in drug court, most juvenile substance abuse is not necessarily primarily attributable to addiction, but is often associated with other questionable behaviors. The recommendations for establishing target population and eligibility criteria are four-fold:

1. Review the overall data collected in the initial needs assessment to look for patterns of juvenile crime in the community: including types of substances being abused; effects of offenders on the community; differences in genders who are offending; can juveniles drug offenders be handled in the existing juvenile system; and finally, will targeting a particular segment of the population solve the community problem.

2. Review the juvenile court resources available to determine the target population, including substance abuse treatment, mental health services, supervision and drug testing.
3. Establish eligibility criteria that reflect the goals of the program and document the criteria in writing.
4. When establishing criteria, the team should review the severity of the initial charge, whether the charge is violent or nonviolent; the criminal history of the offender; the age of the offender; and the adjudication status of the offender.
(BJA. 2003, p.18-19)

Once the target population is defined and the eligibility criteria established, the team should produce a written set of guidelines that will define efficient steps to move juveniles through the drug court process and determine who and when each team member “touches” the juvenile with the appropriate programming. Finally, a model juvenile drug court should have an on-going evaluation mechanism to determine whether “the programs goals, target population, and eligibility criteria need to be updated to reflect changes in available resources, shifting priorities of stakeholders, or agency operations”. (BJA, 2003, p. 19)

Family Engagement

More than any other technique for improving Juvenile Drug Courts, the Strategies document reinforces over and again the importance of family involvement at every level of the program. Juvenile Drug Courts are by nature, “family structured” and “therapeutic” and intended to redirect the behavior of youth, helping them to become productive members of society. The following is a list of some of the most important strategies included in the document:

- Engage the family as a valued partner in all components of the program.
- Youth identify and selecting important caretakers to provide supervision and support.
- Schedule hearings at a time family members can be present.
- Provide transportation and childcare,
- Expanded community resources to include weekends and evenings.
- Guide and structure families to impose incentives and sanctions.
- Provide interpreters, information in various languages and team members that are multicultural and bilingual.

- Overcome issues from previous family members that were in the system that may create trust related concerns.
- Frequent judicial reviews to develop a personal relationships, provide structure and guidance.
- Build partnerships with community organizations to provide treatment, drug testing.
- Tailored interventions to meet complex and varied needs; individual assessment for the youth and family. Services include in the home and out-of-home placements as needed.
- Create policies and procedures that are responsive to cultural differences and train personnel to be culturally competent. Incorporate cultural images in the office or courtroom decorating scheme to build a personal connection.
- Maintain a focus on the strengths and not deficiencies of youth and their families; include praise and focuses on the future rather than the past.
- Allow youth and families to create incentives and sanctions to generate consensus and loyalty to the program. Various levels of family involvement are decided as a team to maintain structure and guidance when the youth is at home.

In one article, Dakof (2015) determined, "... a consensus is emerging about the essential features of effective JDCs, namely, the quality of the treatment provided, the degree to which family members are included in treatment and court proceedings, and the extent to which the JDC procedures are developmentally appropriate [internal citation omitted]."

A study was conducted to determine the effects of multidimensional family therapy ("MDFT") and adolescent group therapy ("AGT"). The involvement of family therapists to create empowerment, respect and understanding between youth and parents was the overall goal. Key conclusions of the study showed from intake to six months the frequency of substance use decreased 76% for MDFT and 65% for AGT. During the same period, both groups showed a record of over 70% reduction in arrests. Thus, both treatments were effective during drug court and during the follow-up phase, MDFT produced significantly better outcomes than AGT on youth self-report of delinquency and externalizing symptoms. Whereas there are some limitations to this study, it is believed that family involvement reduces long-term

incidents of criminal behavior and rearrests (Mitchell et al., 2012, p. 8). Including limitations such as: study was not conducted in non-drug court settings for comparison; only in one jurisdiction; 89% of the subjects were male (p. 8).

In Milwaukee County Children's Court, court officials have managed to more effectively study family engagement using two court assessment tools to increase participation. The first was a court observation instrument and the second was a survey from participants currently involved in the juvenile dependency or juvenile delinquency system. The information provided by both tools is used to determine how to increase family engagement in JDCs in other cities. These tools, when used over time, increased the level of service to families, increased caretaker engagement and presence, and in turn, increased long-term, positive outcomes for youth and their families. There are some limitations. It was one study conducted in a single jurisdiction and during only a week period. The findings suggest that similar studies over a longer period of time in the same jurisdiction could improve family engagement and relationships with court staff members (NCJFCJ, 2014, p. 18-24).

Peter Greenwood explains, "The most successful programs emphasize family interactions and provide skills to the adults who supervise and train the child". (Greenwood, 2008, p. 185) Two family-based intervention programs have also demonstrated success. The Functional Family Therapy ("FFT") and Multisystemic Therapy ("MST") were designed to assist families with behavioral problems by providing 24/7 crisis intervention with Master's degree-level counselors, increased problem-solving skills, enhancing emotional connections and strengthening parents' ability to provide appropriate structure, guidance and limits for their children (p. 198).

Researchers offer a wide variety of possibilities to effectively engage families. A carefully crafted JDC program should include opportunities for family involvement, crisis response, and tools that will help the court to regularly evaluate family's assessment of programs.

Gender Specific Considerations

Under Strategy 9, gender specific programming was seen as a way to bridge the gap between the dissimilar life experiences that at-risk girls and boys encounter on their way through the programs. Notably, the Strategies document cites that girls are more prone to backgrounds of sexual abuse and suicide attempts which leads to an increase of emotional instability throughout their lives. In contrast, boys are more likely to have learning disabilities that will negatively impact their ability to complete school and work.

Similar to the perspective that gave birth to juvenile drug courts that “one court does not fit all sizes,” there have in recent years been decisions by several jurisdictions to divide juvenile drug courts into gender-specific programs. (Levick & Sherman, 2003, p.1-5) The general motivation behind the move is the theory that boys and girls get caught up in substance abuse for different reasons. Moreover, each gender responds differently to criminal punishment theories. Overall there has been considerable thought that ultimately a differently-tailored approach is prudent in treating the different genders.

The most famous of the gender-specific drug court programs is Hawaii’s Girls Court which uses an eleven-component system to guide its operations:

- Programs must provide emotional and physical safety.
- Programs must address the abuse in girls’ lives.
- Programs must be strength-based.
- Programs must be culturally appropriate.
- Programs must be relationship based.
- Programs must address sexuality, including pregnancy and parenting.
- Programs must address the unique health needs of females, including nutritional concerns and regular physical activity.
- Programs must provide equitable educational and vocational opportunities.
- Programs must provide positive female role models and mentors.

- Programs must nurture the spiritual lives of participants.
- Programs must involve members of girls' families or supportive adults in their lives.

This is a more “holistic” approach than one typically expects to encounter in even the juvenile system. It is created around the idea that for girls to succeed in the program, more must be addressed than merely the addiction component. As the eleven points above suggests, the court program views its mission as a rehabilitative one, as much as a legal one. To accomplish this supportive approach, the court itself takes on a unique perspective, including an all-female staff, where it offers an emotionally safe environment for the girls. (Lerer, 2013, p. 86)

In addition to the Hawaii Girls Court, there is an analogue program in Orange County, California that also splits its juvenile court by gender. Even though neither court is drug-specific, both courts recognize that drug use is almost universally applicable to the girls who are in the system, much in the same way that sexual and psychological abuse, and pregnancy impacts them differently than boys. We have included them below because, regardless of how they ended up in the juvenile system, it is instructive to review the difference in treatment that best benefits girls in contrast to boys. Because both courts are more general juvenile court splits, they are examined below from the perspective of treatments.

First, we will take a view of courts' staffing needs for a girls-specific court. Second, we will take a brief look at what can be accomplished to help make facilities that house participants more gender-responsive. Finally, we shall end with a view of the programming needs for girls.

Staffing:

Both the girls' courts in Orange County, California and Hawaii benefit from an all-female staff. Hawaii's Girl's Court feels that this arrangement facilitates open discussion, activities, and even mentor programs are more readily available for the girls involved. “Part of the court's focus is to foster open discussions about gender-specific topics in court. Girls are expected to share personal information in these group settings, and they would arguably feel uncomfortable doing so if boys were present.” (Harrison, 2012, p. 799).

However, the success of those courts notwithstanding, the Berkley Center for Criminal Justice (“BCCJ”) takes a more muted view of the necessity of an all-woman staff in that male staff members are capable of providing positive roles because “[m]any detained girls have never had a healthy relationship with an adult male.” (BCCJ, 2010, p.9)

Programming:

In addition to the girls’ courts in Orange County, California and Hawaii, three states, Connecticut, Oregon and Minnesota, have statutes providing for gender responsive programming. Moreover, “a significant number of the juvenile justice statutes also require that dispositions be based on the youth’s individual needs”. (Levick & Sherman, 2003, p. 18) It is an impressive list that Levick & Sherman compiled, having no fewer than eight examples of states’ allowances based on the commonly-accepted principles of fashioning individual solutions for juveniles in general.

Moreover, even when legislatures are slow to adopt statutory provisions, courts have stepped in to help fill the gap, even with some reluctance and imperfection: “The [Louisiana Supreme Court] echoed the Pennsylvania Superior Court. That court stated that “the unique nature of the juvenile system is manifested in its non-criminal, or ‘civil,’ nature, its focus on rehabilitation and individual treatment rather than retribution, and the state’s role as *parens patriae* in managing the welfare of the juvenile in state custody”. (Levick & Sherman, 2003, p. 21) That article concludes in support of the same active role for the state as their research showed:

[As other researchers] have concluded, even in the face of legislative trends toward a more punitive juvenile justice system, “state laws [have] preserve[d] their original rehabilitative goals and [these goals] form the heart of delinquent children’s right to receive such care and services. Simply put, states are obligated to serve as the substitute parents they promise to be. They are responsible, along with parents, for ensuring that children in their care master the identifiable skills needed to develop into responsible and productive adult citizens. (Levick & Sherman, 2003, p. 23)

Despite the different factors that drag girls and boys down into situations where they become a part of the juvenile justice system, the programs for girls are largely “modeled after programs that serve males. Consequently, girls, and especially minority girls, increasingly are being placed in programs that fail to meet their unique developmental, physiological and emotional needs” (ABA & NBA 2001). In this

joint presentation between the American Bar Association and National Bar Association, the recommendations focused heavily on suggestions to better treat females such as taking steps to, “[i]dentify policies and practices which avoid ushering girls into juvenile justice facilities for status offenses, charging girls with assault in family conflict situations, detaining girls to “protect” them, and over-utilizing secure facilities for girls, particularly minority girls.” (ABA & NBA, 2001, p. 27) It further recommended “[p]romot[ing] alternatives to detention and incarceration for girls and increase awareness of the harms of detention.” (ABA & NBA, 2001, p. 27)

In the above unnamed facility, Levick & Sherman (2003) generate a laundry list of how an ill-formed program may fail girls in many ways. Nearly all of the shortcomings generate from the underlying problem that this was a program developed for male juveniles that was never appropriately altered to accommodate the needs of the 20 girls who were placed in the facility. The failure stretched from medical treatment to educational deficiencies:

Because the program was only adding twenty youths, the program administrators determined no additional staff were needed. The existing programming and schedules were continued. This decision has plainly disadvantaged the girls in the program. They do not get a daily sick call, which is needed due to the increased medical complaints of girls and the way in which those complaints affect their attitudes and functioning. The failure to add staff does not allow girls the level of staff attention they require and also results in girls being confined to their unit throughout the weekend because they need to be supervised apart from the boys. Girls also receive less gross motor recreation than the boys, who are seen as “needing more exercise.” When the girls are in the yard, they are with boys who monopolize the basketball court. Finally, the school program is designed around the boys' educational level, which is below ninth grade. This makes them ineligible for GED or college preparation. The girls, many of whom are runaways, have higher academic achievement, but they are held back by the boys' academic limitations. Finally, with no new staff or programming, staff are untrained in gender-responsive approaches. Consequently, girls' mental health, trauma and family issues are not addressed. (p. 9-10)

So the myriad of issues that separate the needs of girls from the needs of boys is relatively well understood in the academic literature, including legal scholarship. However, the confluence of social science and the law frequently creates turbulent rapids when navigating the court procedures of the legal world.

Legal considerations

Even though this paper is targeted to mostly a public administration audience, by virtue of its juxtaposition within the courts and legal framework, it is necessary to spend at least a little time in contemplation of its constitutionality. While it seems well within reason that because their motivations and punishments are different, courts should be allowed to address girls and boys differently. However, any governmental actor must always tread lightly when fashioning different programs on the basis of gender, lest it pass beyond well-intentioned practicality into the realm of mal-informed discrimination.

There is significant legal scholarship in this area which points to the intermediate scrutiny standard for separate-but-equal programs to gender equality. (See Levick & Sherman and Harrison) There is a wealth of recognition in the social sciences that girls and boys simply have different needs. Unlike strict scrutiny, which presupposes segregation by race or national origin is unconstitutional and demands a *compelling government purpose* to allow the government to separate people by physical characteristics, intermediate scrutiny perceives that the two sexes may sometimes have different enough demands or needs that an *important government purpose* is enough to overcome the constitutional question. The most widely accepted way for the government to defeat the supposed unconstitutionality of racial discrimination is national security. However, we can see intermediate scrutiny at play elsewhere. The most obvious place, until recently, was in the rejection of women in combat roles. However, the separation of women and men in prisons and other government-related contexts is also a visible example. (Harrison, 2012, p. 785)

Sanctions and Incentives

As Juvenile Courts developed in the late 20th century, a shift from the punitive, correctional systems of Adult Court to a more rehabilitative system took place. This coincided with much development in the field of behavior modification. That body of research showed that incentives should be used in conjunction with sanctions to increase positive outcomes among court-involved youth. (NCJFCJ, 2014)

The Department of Justice' *Strategies* document also endorses the sanctions and incentives dynamic, suggesting that Juvenile Drug Courts should seek to develop an individualized set of sanctions and incentives that are catered to the youth's strengths and weaknesses. It also encourages the engagement of the family and the community to create therapeutically sound responses to the positive achievements and negative behavior. (p. 53).

The importance of individualized sanctions is reinforced by William Meyers' (2005), "Ten Science-Based Principles of Changing Behavior through the Use of Reinforcement and Punishment." In that presentation, Meyers reminds the audience that "Responses are in the eye of the behaver" (sic). For example, one youth might be a strong writer, and not be intimidated by the task of writing an essay about her behavior, while the other may truly struggle to express himself in writing. No two people will have the same perception of a sanction. Meyer reports, "Exploratory studies report that drug court participants who perceived a more certain and meaningful connection between their own conduct and the imposition of sanctions and rewards tended to have better outcomes than individuals who did not perceive such a connection." (p.1)

Despite strong recommendations made by Meyers and by the "Strategies in Practice" document, many Drug Court programs still fall back on the use of detention and incarceration as a sanction. Here again, perceptions may vary from juvenile to juvenile. One survey of adult offenders found that they actually found time in jail to be less severe than several out-of-jail alternatives. "Offenders, Judges, and Officers Rate the Relative Severity" (May, Moore & Moore, 2008)

Meanwhile significant cost savings are made possible by avoiding the use of detention as a sanction "due to frustration with the client, lack of alternatives, or because they utilize a standardized response system." (Wormer, Lutz, 2011, p. 18). One study found that the savings could be as much as \$5000 per participant, when youth use a variety of "non-detention based sanctions."

Focus on sanctions more so than incentives is a common occurrence in Juvenile Drug Courts. However, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) suggests that incentives outweigh sanctions four-to-one. The organization also encourages the use of behavioral charts to create

sanctions and incentives that are responsive to target behaviors. The Council also suggests that these individualized sanctions should be updated regularly to respond to changes in behavior. The NCJFCJ also offers a workbook for teams to establish sanctions. The workbook walks team members through the process of evaluating current sanctions and incentives, and creating a program that is more responsive to the needs, as well as the interests of youth participants.

Methods for Collection of Information

Our methods to evaluate Polk County Juvenile Drug court included the study of the court's policies and procedures, as well as additional qualitative and quantitative evidence collected. This evidence was collected through a survey tool and through interviews with key court staff members.

Survey Tool

In order to gauge perception of four identified needs, our group conducted an online survey in which 26 people participated. These participants self-identified into the following categories:

1. Those currently working as part of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court Staff
2. Those who have previously worked as part of the PCJDC staff.
3. Those who work with youth who are PCJDC participants.

A filter question excluded one of the 26 people from the survey. Participation was elective and encouraged by the PCJDC Judge. Whereas exact participation rates cannot be measured because of the open nature of the survey, about 90% of those asked to participate did so. See Appendix C for the breakdown of respondents.

The survey offered a series of statements based on the four identified needs. Participants rated their response from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. The survey, as well as the responses, are included in Appendices D and E.

Interviews with Key Figures

Our group also collected information and insight using focused, but open-ended interviews with four key figures:

1. Judge Collin Witt, Fifth Judicial District, appointed to oversee the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court

2. John Hawkins, former Juvenile Court Officer, appointed to provide court supervision for youth, as well as Drug Court Officers. Hawkins is now the Juvenile Court Officer Supervisor.
3. Lawanda Sanders, Drug Court Officer, provides direct supervision to youth participants, including curfew checks, family interventions, and other supports as needed.
4. Judge Susan Cox, Fifth Judicial District court, and former County Attorney charged with participation in Juvenile Drug Court.

These interviews were recorded and are available upon request.

Recommendations for PCJDC

Admissions

Many of the studies we reviewed indicate that individuals involved in juvenile drug courts have a much higher success rate in their ability to distance themselves from destructive behavior than those who are administered through the standard juvenile court system. (Marlowe, 2010, p. 3) With that type of achievement, it stands to reason that any young person who stands to benefit from involvement in PCJDC should be provided that opportunity. We will direct our attention to specific policy areas where we believe our recommendations would be practical and could potentially lead to more successful outcomes.

When reviewing PCJDC referral processes, any juvenile court officer, assistant county attorney, or attorney for the child are considered primary referral persons, and have discretion to refer the juvenile to the drug court by emailing the assigned JCO. The JCO makes the initial decision about whether the juvenile is eligible. Since there is a limit of 24 participants at a time in the PCJDC, even eligible juveniles may be rejected based on resource or space limitations.

According to PCJDC's referral document, juveniles can be referred to juvenile drug court two ways, each with its own criteria:

1. Juveniles Coming from the Community - have been charged with the commission of a delinquent act. Juvenile can be accepted even if the act is not a drug charge, but will be disqualified if the act is already adjudicated or the act is violent or involved weapons or sex. s
2. Juveniles Coming from Inpatient Treatment - have completed residential treatment and treatment counselors recommend that the juvenile needs a higher level of oversight; if mental health issues

are present, if the juvenile is under 17 years, 8 months of age; and if there is no violent behavior present.

Once one of the two requirements is satisfied, a juvenile still must willingly sign an agreement to participate and express “more than a begrudging willingness to follow program expectations” (PCJDC Referral, p.3), and have parent or guardian cooperation.

Almost 81% of our survey respondents either agree or strongly agree that the PCJDC admits the youth who are most in need of PCJDC programming, and 75% agree or are neutral that the admission criteria is consistently applied. One of the problems of the PCJDC referral process is that the secondary referral persons the JCO assigned to the juvenile drug court are expected to make an assumption that, “the primary referral persons are considering all juveniles whom they are coming into contact with the program.” (Drug Court Referral, p. 1)

Based on statements from those we interviewed who are involved in PCJDC, this assumption is not generally dependable. Judge Colin Witt claimed that there are areas in which the process could be improved. “The manner in which the cases get referred, it can’t be based on happenstance, and that’s where we need to continue to get better.” (C. Witt, personal communication, March 30, 2015)

It is our observation that the current referral policy may not be affording the opportunity to consider all potential candidates. Through our observations of court proceedings and interviews with professionals involved, it does not appear that the composition of participants closely resembles a cross-section of the population in the Polk County Juvenile Court System. It would not be reasonable to assume that the makeup of the PCJDC participants should always identically match the composition of the larger population involved in the system, but we believe that there may be existing impediments which are preventing inclusion of juvenile offenders that could greatly benefit from the drug court environment.

Recommendation #1 - Consider All Potential Candidates

Our recommendation to assist in clearing these obstacles and “widening the net” for potential participants is to develop a specific set of hard criteria available from the electronic data collection system

that would be utilized in determining the list of eligible candidates from the juvenile court pool. In order to provide an opinion as to why an individual should not be on the list of qualified candidates, the JCO would complete a review of the candidate's file and grant an opportunity for any of the remaining program personnel to object to his or her findings. The objection window should be a short period of time, after all of the necessary information has been entered into the database, to assure that the juvenile is receiving timely consideration. There could still be reasonable objections related to individual circumstances for denying participation; however, this process would at least provide an opportunity for all of the professionals involved to be made aware of potential candidates who may not otherwise have received consideration.

The motivation for change and his or her readiness for treatment are important aspects when considering a candidate for participation in JDC. Although these are essential elements to the success of an individual in the program, they are not always readily apparent to those reviewing a candidate's background or from the impressions they received through interaction with a candidate. While these areas are certainly worthwhile in consideration of participants, their evaluation may not always be equally applied.

Previous studies of admission procedures for many juvenile drug courts suggest that there are often instances of informal and subjective selection criteria applied by individuals involved in the selection process that result in numerous exit points for candidates who ultimately could benefit through participation. (Belenko et al., 2011) We have learned through our interviews, survey study, and observations that there are likely similar pitfalls and room for improvement in this area for the PCJDC system. We have collected information that indicates that there are many of the Juvenile Court Officers have never referred an individual for consideration in PCJDC. It is a reasonable deduction that this lack of referral has in fact prevented otherwise-qualified and cooperative juveniles from being considered.

Recommendation #2 - Reduce Subjectivity

There is apparent subjectivity and inconsistency involved in the PCJDC determination of suitability of candidates during the referral process based primarily on the juvenile's motivation level and

readiness for treatment. Studies indicate that suitability determinations have been found to have no impact on drug court graduation rates or post-program recidivism. (Carey, S.M., & Perkins, T. 2008). Due to the potential that juveniles who could greatly benefit from the drug court process may be excluded from participation, it is recommended that subjectivity be reduced from the referral process in order to allow for broader inclusion for individuals who may not appear to be ideal candidates before a more complete review is done.

Family Engagement

Family engagement is valued by the Polk County Drug Court staff (PCDCS) as evidenced by an 88% positive response rate documented in a recent survey. During an interview with Judge Witt, he explained the commitment of drug court officers and what they do to keep family members involved, “They go to their homes to see where the youth live and then we make significant adjustments based on family circumstances.” Those adjustments include transportation, interpreters, home visits and flexible scheduling.

Unfortunately, only 29% of the PCDCS agreed that parents and guardians desired to be present and engaged during court sessions. Susan Cox, Honorable Associate Judge explained, “Family engagement is a delicate dance. At times it is good and times it is terrible.” Witt added, “We have to identify kids whose parents are active addicts and we have to deal with it.”

The Strategies document indicates that a family member’s commitment to the program is paramount to the continuum of success. As stated, “The quality of the relationship between juvenile drug court professionals and families is a significant predictor of case success (43).” Polk County interviews and drug court observation suggests that although family engagement is valued, family members and guardians are not always present due to circumstances beyond their control and their lack of desire to be engaged.

After several interviews and comments, it was apparent that lack of family involvement did not stop the court from following through on recommendations to reach positive outcomes for each

participant in the program. John Hawkins explained that family involvement is a priority however, “It is different because of the Judge; he wants to do what is best and doesn’t want to be boxed in.”

Interviews, observations and survey data conclusions support several best practices and guidelines outlined in the strategies document. The following recommendations are made with the thought in mind that the PCDC is getting amazing results with the limited resources and time they have available for youth and their guardians. The goal is to point out areas that can be enhanced to encourage family engagement and improve attendance at court sessions and activities in the future. Based on our research, we believe the following changes and additions would improve family engagement.

Recommendation #1

Hold a mandatory family forum once a month in the evening. The forum should be held away from the courtroom with ample parking and easy access to DART bus stops. Include introductions, program updates, discussions, data-sharing and present an educational topic. Goal is to build relationships and promote involvement.

Recommendation #2

Create and distribute a monthly newsletter for participants, community members, and families to “get the word” out about the great work being accomplished and encourage community involvement and support. Include pictures and team member bios, program highlights, accomplishments, a calendar of events, and featured community supporters. Goal is to call for action to “get involved.”

Recommendation #3

Use assessment tools to measure and improve family engagement and the overall performance of the drug court staff, such as those used by The Milwaukee County Children’s Court (NCJFCJ, June, 2014). First, develop and use a “Court Observation Instrument” to collect data, to evaluate staff and the program, to improve services provided by the Court, and outcomes of the youth participants. Examples of surveys are included in Appendix A. Second, develop and distribute a “Court Experience Survey” to past and current participating families to find out areas drug court has been beneficial and where they

need enhancements. The goal is to increase family engagement and improve outcomes for youth so they can perform successfully during drug court and after they graduate from the program. We suggest Appendix B be used as a guide when developing the tool.

Recommendation #4

Enhance the Functional Family Therapy (FFT) with Multisystemic Therapy (MST), a program to assist family members in person and with a 24/7 phone intervention hotline. The family can call a crisis counselor for a face-to-face meeting or over the phone services. The MST program would complement and support the work of the PCDC by giving family members an objective third party to assist them. In addition, this service would be used after hours to allow drug court officers to have time away from work during the middle of the night and weekends. We suggest the PCDC solicit bids for services in the Des Moines, Iowa area that best serves their needs.

Gender-specific programming

Having already examined at some length the differences between the ideal treatment options between boys and girls who are before tribunals, we now turn to a determination of the “best practices” for dividing programs by gender.

Recommendation #1: Staff Training

While the literature is split between whether it is more appropriate to have an all-female staff for girl’s programming or the existence properly-trained male staff is also important in fostering positive recovery, there is significant consensus that the girls be given frequent mentoring by women in the roles. Further, adding staff is one of the more expensive aspects to having a gender-centric programming. With that in mind, and the fact that the bulk of the recommendation for an all-female court staff comes primarily from Hawaii’s anecdotal preferences and not by settled science, PCJDC should seek to maintain its level of well-trained staff, both male and female, but in which women are represented at a level to enable girls in the system to have appropriate access to mentoring.

Recommendation #2: Programming

Consistent with the research and widely in spirit with the tailoring of programs to individual needs, there are indicators that the best outcomes are arrived at when they fit the needs of each gender instead of attempting too hard to meld differing approaches together. It is difficult to carve out a gender-specific role without acknowledging the continuing emergence of legal and societal acceptance of the GLBT movement. While those concerns are worthy of serious consideration, they are beyond the scope of this particular paper. For now, it is a tremendous benefit to the court to take a step toward gender-specific programming more generally. The Polk County Juvenile Drug Court should seek to offer either occasional JDC programs that are gender specific, or separate the program into male and female courts.

Sanctions and Incentives

Polk County Drug Court staff clearly support the use of incentives, as recommended by the Strategies document. Of the respondents, 19 of 24 (83%) agree or strongly agree with the sentence “Sanctions are tailored to the individual youth.” Meanwhile, interviews evidenced that while this statement is true, there is no formal process for creating and following a behavior plan for each drug court participant.

Both Hawkins and Witt report circumstances where participants received unique incentives and sanctions representative of their current situations. Incentives included a baseball glove for a youth who couldn’t afford it, McDonalds gift certificates, and a celebratory meal upon graduation. Sanctions included observing weekend adult drug court and writing essay.

When asked about the NCFJCJ’s recommendation to offer four incentives for every sanction, Hawkin’s reports:

“What tends to happen, is that the incentives tend to be more verbal- attaboys - verbal encouragement, we’re going to have to get to the point where we put more of that burden on the drug court officers, but we have to be able to provide them with the resources to give more tangible incentives. The goal is to get to the point where we eventually have the money to tailor incentives.” (John Hawkins Interview 17:13)

Stronger processes for behavior modification will help to improve the effect of sanctions and incentives in PCJDC. We make the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1

The Drug Court Officer, upon intake of a new participant, establishes a chart of sanctions and incentives with the youth based on target behaviors. A chart is included in Appendix F to illustrate a potential method for tailoring incentives and sanctions.

The chart is based on target behaviors identified by the court. We suggest that the Court consider the following behaviors as “targets” for sanctions and incentives.

1. No substance abuse
2. Strong academic engagement
3. Strong family relationships

For each target behavior, the Drug Court Officer, the parent, and the youth will identify incentives and sanctions, based on the intensity of success for failure. A list of acceptable sanctions and incentives should be created. The DCO and youth could then draw from that list as needed. Upon completion, the youth, judge, and parent, at an individual hearing, will all sign the document as a mutual agreement. At this time, the youth should establish at what point, he or she believes he or she should be detained.

The new formalized process will create more equity between youth. Youth will also be more responsive, as they seek to respect the guidelines that they themselves set.

Recommendation #2

Use community resources as both sanctions and incentives. In Des Moines, a wide variety of programs exist for youth including the Young Women Resource Center, ArtForceIowa, Children and Families Urban Movement, and Run!DSM. During relapses and bumps in the road, the court should seek to connect youth with more programs and services from which they might benefit.

Additional Recommendations

In addition to those categories mentioned, we offer two more recommendations that could help to address all four needs cited previously.

Additional Drug Court Officer

If possible an additional drug court officer could make a significant impact on more careful admissions practices, on gender specific practices, on family involvement and family crisis management, and on improved incentives and sanctions. We recommend the addition of another DCO position, thus decreasing the caseload for each individual officer. Those officers would take on a larger role in the following areas:

1. In the admissions and intake process, assuring that all referrals are carefully investigated and considered, and that that person has a clear view of the youth's obstacles.
2. In family engagement, respond more ably to family crises, and follow up with families who are not able to attend JDC practices.
3. In incentives and sanctions, developing with youth and families tailored sanctions that reflect the motivations and interests of the youth, as well as principal responsibility for delivering those sanctions and incentives.

Better Collection of Data

In our survey, 15 of 24 respondents or 62.5% were either neutral or disagreed with the statement "I am aware of data and success rates for Polk County's JDC graduates." This figure, in addition to interviews with the key figures, proved that Polk County Juvenile Drug Court lacks meaningful data to gauge the success rates of graduates, the involvement of parents, and the views of all those people involved (youth, family, team members, community). Whereas the JDC is highly esteemed by the community to be high quality, it does not have any numbers to justify its belief. We recommend that the court begin to track the following data:

- Recidivism among graduates. This will help the court to know if youth are less likely to commit repeat offenses after graduating from Drug Court. This study should continue in order to better understand long-term effect into adulthood.

- Academic outcomes including ongoing achievement in school and ultimately high school graduation. When compared to other delinquents, this number will show if youth are more or less successful in school.
- Youth Program Quality Review. A yearly study of parent, youth, JDC team, and community perceptions regarding PCJDC will help program to continue to steer itself in the appropriate direction.

Stronger Policies

Interviews and survey responses acclaimed Judge Collin Witt and JCO John Hawkins as having a strong influence on the program. These two figures, along with other team members, have continuously steered the PCJDC in the right direction, following the strategies document and informed by best practices.

However, we believe that stronger policies should be put into place. The entire program, which is more than 15 years running is guided by a simple, 5 page document. The pro-social, positive policies that Hawkins, Witt, and Cox have adopted by custom should be written down as a guide for future drug courts. These policies should include:

- Admissions process policies that require JDC consideration by key personnel
- Processes for sanctions and incentives
- Expectations for youth and their families
- Expectations for each JDC member

Conclusion

Our comprehensive review of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court highlighted many of its strengths in its ability to change the lives of juvenile offenders. Through review of relevant research on juvenile drug courts, interviews with key staff implementing the drug court and a survey of employees who are or have been involved in the court processes, we developed a series of key recommendations to improve court practices in four key areas: 1) Admissions; 2) Family Engagement; 3) Gender-specific

Programming; and, 4) Incentives and sanctions. With at least partial implementation of the recommendations, we expect that PCJDC will have greater success in impacting juveniles for another 15 years.

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Appendix A:

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COURT OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

Court Observation									
Hearing Date			Case No.	Coder	Courtroom	Judge Sex			
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	Scheduled Start Time:	Start Time:	End Time:				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
8	9	10	Parties Present			Hearing Type			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
26	27	28	29	30	31	32			
27	28	29	30	31	32	33			
28	29	30	31	32	33	34			
29	30	31	32	33	34	35			
30	31	32	33	34	35	36			
31	32	33	34	35	36	37			
32	33	34	35	36	37	38			
33	34	35	36	37	38	39			
34	35	36	37	38	39	40			
35	36	37	38	39	40	41			
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37	38	39	40	41	42	43			
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39	40	41	42	43	44	45			
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51	52	53	54	55	56	57			
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55	56	57	58	59	60	61			
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57	58	59	60	61	62	63			
58	59	60	61	62	63	64			
59	60	61	62	63	64	65			
60	61	62	63	64	65	66			
61	62	63	64	65	66	67			
62	63	64	65	66	67	68			
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64	65	66	67	68	69	70			
65	66	67	68	69	70	71			
66	67	68	69	70	71	72			
67	68	69	70	71	72	73			
68	69	70	71	72	73	74			
69	70	71	72	73	74	75			
70	71	72	73	74	75	76			
71	72	73	74	75	76	77			
72	73	74	75	76	77	78			
73	74	75	76	77	78	79			
74	75	76	77	78	79	80			
75	76	77	78	79	80	81			
76	77	78	79	80	81	82			
77	78	79	80	81	82	83			
78	79	80	81	82	83	84			
79	80	81	82	83	84	85			
80	81	82	83	84	85	86			
81	82	83	84	85	86	87			
82	83	84	85	86	87	88			
83	84	85	86	87	88	89			
84	85	86	87	88	89	90			
85	86	87	88	89	90	91			
86	87	88	89	90	91	92			
87	88	89	90	91	92	93			
88	89	90	91	92	93	94			
89	90	91	92	93	94	95			
90	91	92	93	94	95	96			
91	92	93	94	95	96	97			
92	93	94	95	96	97	98			
93	94	95	96	97	98	99			
94	95	96	97	98	99	100			

Discussion Topics
0 = No Discussion; 1 = Statement Only; 2 = More than Statement

	Mother	Father	Child
Was there discussion about:			
Relative resources.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Supports/services needed.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Well-being.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Resilience.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Family Strengths (Positives).....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2

Engagement of Parties
0 = Not at All; 1 = Somewhat; 2 = Definitely

	Mother	Father	Child
Given an opportunity to be heard.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Parties were given a choice re. services.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Judge identified the next steps to the person.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Judge explained the hearing process.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Judge made eye contact with the person.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Court considered the family's needs when scheduling the next hearing.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Attorney advocated for his/her client.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Respectful treatment between judge and parties.....	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2

Did the judge?
Y = Yes; N = No; NA = Not Applicable

	Mother	Father	Child
Speak directly to the person?.....	Y N NA	Y N NA	Y N NA
Address the person by name?.....	Y N NA	Y N NA	Y N NA
Ask if the person has any questions?.....	Y N NA	Y N NA	Y N NA
Ask if person understands the next steps?.....	Y N NA	Y N NA	Y N NA

Notes:

Appendix B:

APPENDIX B

COURT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

We are interested in your opinion of how you were treated in court today. Your answers to these questions can be used to help improve the court system. Your answers will only be used to measure the court's strengths and weaknesses and will not affect your case in any way. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey.

What month and year did your case open? _____ month _____ year

Is this the 1st hearing on your case? _____ yes _____ no

Please indicate your agreement with each statement, using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Neutral	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree
It was easy to find where I was supposed to be at court today.....1	2	3	4	5
I had to wait a long time on my hearings.....1	2	3	4	5
I found attending court today to be very stressful.....1	2	3	4	5
I believe my family will get the help we really need from CPS.....1	2	3	4	5
The judge treated me with respect.....1	2	3	4	5
The judge explained to me the reason for his/her decision.....1	2	3	4	5
The judge listened to me.....1	2	3	4	5
I had a chance to say everything I wanted to say.....1	2	3	4	5
The judge spoke directly to me.....1	2	3	4	5
I feel like I can trust CPS to be fair and see my side of things.....1	2	3	4	5
I helped make the decisions for my case.....1	2	3	4	5
I understood what happened in court today.....1	2	3	4	5
I understand what I am supposed to do next.....1	2	3	4	5
All of my questions were answered.....1	2	3	4	5
CPS is not out to get me.....1	2	3	4	5
The judge was fair.....1	2	3	4	5
I agree with the decisions made in court today.....1	2	3	4	5

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience in court today? _____

Please check your role in the case: ☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ Other: _____

What kind of case are you here for (mark all that apply)? ☐ Child Welfare ☐ Juvenile Delinquency ☐ Other

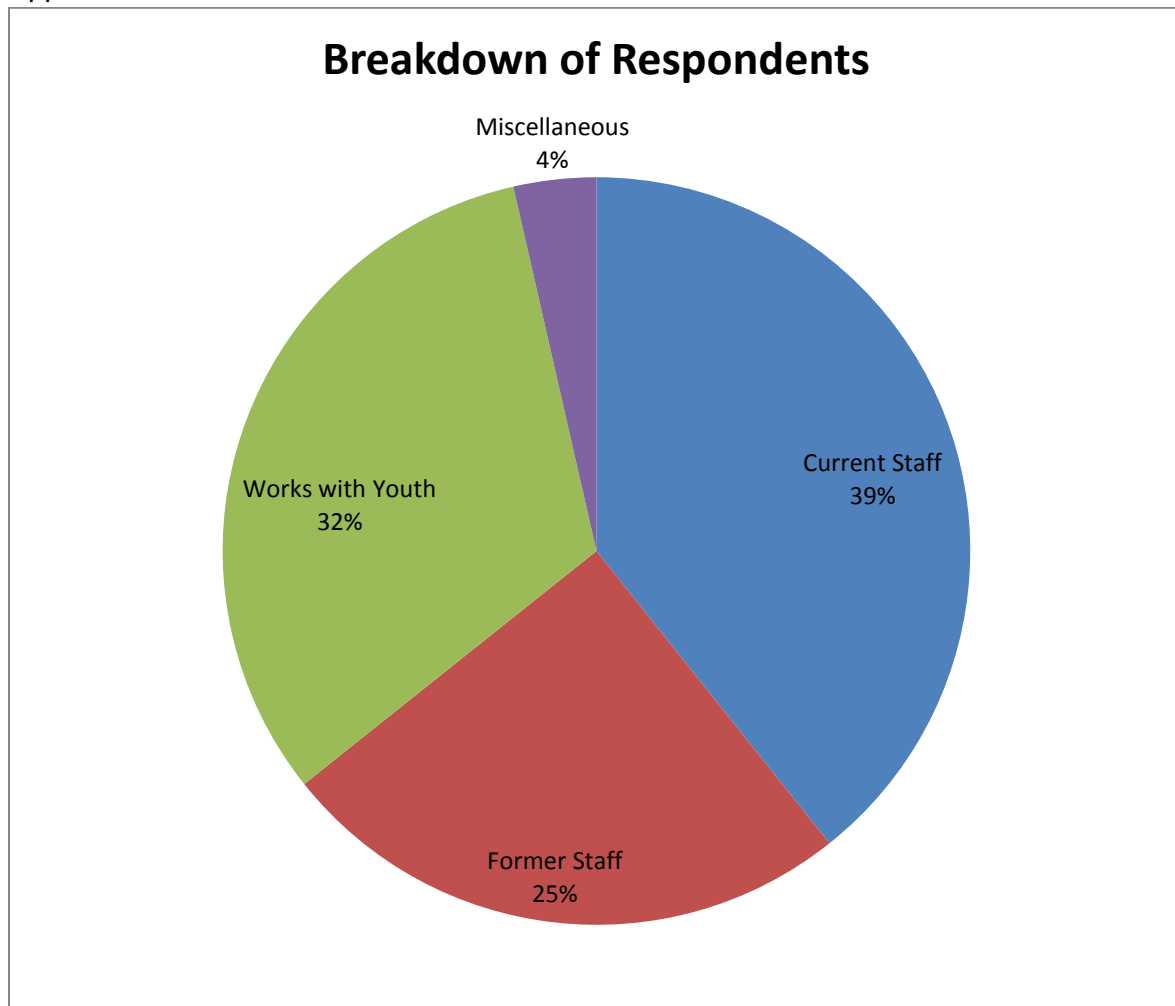
Please check your race/ethnicity (mark all that apply):

☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Black/African American ☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Native American ☐ Other: _____

What is your age? _____

Appendix C:



Appendix D:

This survey has been composed by a group of MPA students studying the state of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court. It is intended for drug court staff that are regularly been involved, or have been involved in said court. Following, you will find a list of statements. Please rate each statement between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

Statements	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Polk County's Juvenile Drug Court is an effective response to juvenile drug abuse.	1	2	3	4	5					
I truly believe that youth in Polk County's Juvenile Drug Court are less likely to recidivate than those youth in regular court.	1	2	3	4	5					
Youth are treated equally in JDC.	1	2	3	4	5					
Sanctions are tailored to the individual youth.	1	2	3	4	5					
Youth are well-rewarded for success.	1	2	3	4	5					
Sanctions and incentives positively affect student behavior.	1	2	3	4	5					
Detention is used effectively as a sanction.	1	2	3	4	5					
Admission criteria is consistently applied to all cases.	1	2	3	4	5					
Youth are objectively chosen.	1	2	3	4	5					
The youth most in need of the Juvenile Drug Court program are the ones admitted.	1	2	3	4	5					
Girls are treated equally to boys in JDC programs and services.	1	2	3	4	5					
Girls participate as actively as boys in JDC programs.	1	2	3	4	5					

Girls would benefit from a gender-specific JDC.	1	2	3	4	5
Family engagement is valued by JDC staff.	1	2	3	4	5
Efforts are made to accommodate family/parental needs, especially in the case of the following items (Please rate each item individually:					
-Flexible Scheduling	1	2	3	4	5
-interpretation/translation	1	2	3	4	5
-transportation	1	2	3	4	5
-treatment/therapy	1	2	3	4	5
-cultural differences	1	2	3	4	5
-adult drug-dependency	1	2	3	4	5
Youth are less successful when exposed intergenerational drug abuse.	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of recidivism rates for JDC graduates.	1	2	3	4	5
Drug court policy decisions are driven by evidence-based practices.	1	2	3	4	5

Demographic Data:

How long have you worked on the JDC staff?

What is your position on the JDC Staff?

What is your gender?

What is your age?

Have you participated in any JDC continuing education opportunities in the past year?

What do you think JDC does well (open-ended)?

What do you think JDC could do better (open-ended)?

Appendix E: Survey Results

Question 1: Identification

Answer Choices	Responses
I am currently part of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court team.	39.29% 11
I was previously part of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court team.	25.00% 7
I am not a part of the team, but I work with youth who are Juvenile Drug Court participants.	32.14% 9
I am not involved in the team or with JDC participants.	3.57% 1
Total	28

Statement responses:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
Polk County's Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) responds effectively to juvenile drug abuse and addiction.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	41.67% 10	54.17% 13	24	4.50
All youth in JDC are treated equally.	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	16.67% 4	45.83% 11	29.17% 7	24	3.96
Sanctions are tailored to the individual youth.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	45.83% 11	37.50% 9	24	4.17
Youth are well-rewarded for success.	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	50.00% 12	33.33% 8	24	4.08
Sanctions and incentives positively affect student behavior.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	50.00% 12	29.17% 7	24	4.08
Detention is an effective sanction for PCJDC violators.	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	33.33% 8	50.00% 12	8.33% 2	24	3.58
Admission criteria is consistently applied to all potential JDC participants.	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	16.67% 4	50.00% 12	25.00% 6	24	3.92
JDC admits the youth who are most in need of JDC programming.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.09% 6	60.87% 14	13.04% 3	23	3.87
Girls are treated equally to boys in JDC programs and services.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	50.00% 12	25.00% 6	24	3.96
Girls participate as actively as boys in JDC programs.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	54.17% 13	20.83% 5	24	3.92
Girls would benefit from a gender-specific JDC program.	0.00% 0	17.39% 4	21.74% 5	26.09% 6	34.78% 8	23	3.78
Family engagement is valued by JDC staff.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	45.83% 11	41.67% 10	24	4.29
Most parents and guardians want to be present for JDC sessions, even if they are unable.	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	50.00% 12	29.17% 7	0.00% 0	24	3.08
Youth are less successful when exposed to intergenerational drug abuse.	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	33.33% 8	41.67% 10	12.50% 3	24	3.54
I am aware of data and success rates for Polk County's JDC graduates.	8.33% 2	33.33% 8	20.83% 5	33.33% 8	4.17% 1	24	2.92
JDC policy decisions are driven by evidence-based practices.	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	25.00% 6	41.67% 10	12.50% 3	24	3.46
Polk County JDC policies are first class.	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	25.00% 6	37.50% 9	29.17% 7	24	3.88

Response to family needs:

	Very Poorly	Poorly	Adequate	Well	Very Well	Total	Weighted Average
Need for flexible scheduling so that family members can be involved.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	25.00% 6	41.67% 10	29.17% 7	24	3.96
Need for Interpretation/translation to and from another language so that family members can fully understand.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	33.33% 8	41.67% 10	24	4.13
Need for transportation assistance to and from JDC activities.	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	33.33% 8	20.83% 5	33.33% 8	24	3.75
Need for mental health support.	0.00% 0	16.67% 4	20.83% 5	33.33% 8	29.17% 7	24	3.75
Need for awareness of cultural differences.	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	25.00% 6	45.83% 11	25.00% 6	24	3.92
Need for treatment related to a parent or a family member's drug-dependency.	0.00% 0	37.50% 9	29.17% 7	25.00% 6	8.33% 2	24	3.04

Time involved with PCJDC:

Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 6 months	13.04% 3
6 months to 1 year	4.35% 1
1 to 2 years	26.09% 6
3 or more years	56.52% 13
Total	23

Gender:

Answer Choices	Responses
Female	56.52% 13
Male	43.48% 10
Total	23

Age:

Answer Choices	Responses
18 to 24	0.00% 0
25 to 34	34.78% 8
35 to 44	34.78% 8
45 to 54	21.74% 5
55 to 64	8.70% 2
65 to 74	0.00% 0
75 or older	0.00% 0
Total	23

NB: Answers to open ended questions to maintain confidentiality of participants.

Appendix F: Incentives and Sanctions

BEHAVIOR GOALS	BEHAVIOR TO REINFORCE	VERIFICATION METHOD	MENU OF INCENTIVES

BEHAVIOR TO DISCOURAGE OR ELIMINATE	METHODS TO MONITOR BEHAVIOR	TREATMENT RESPONSE	COURT SANCTION